

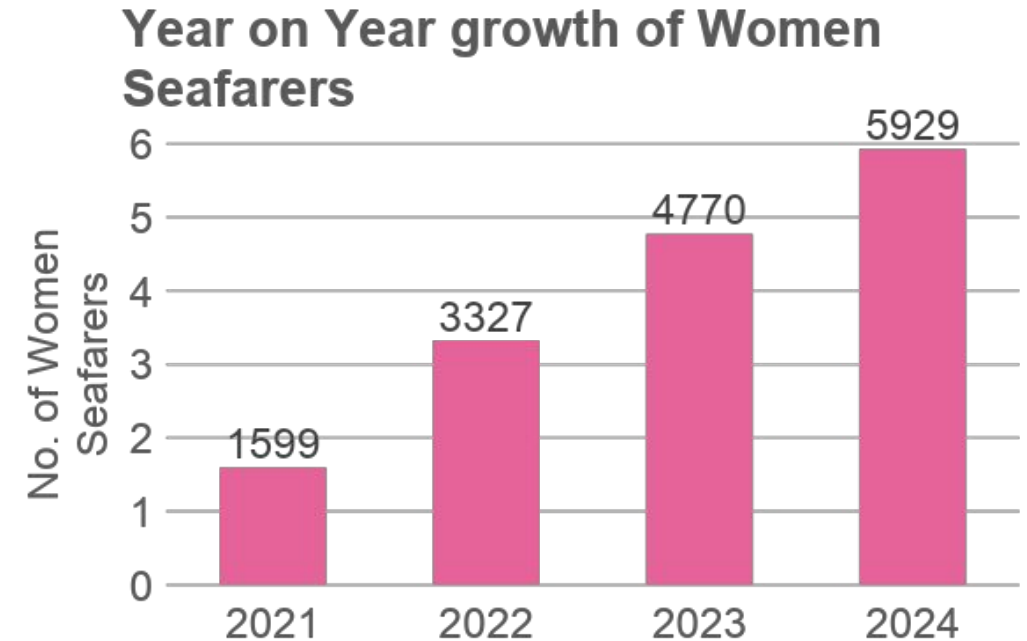
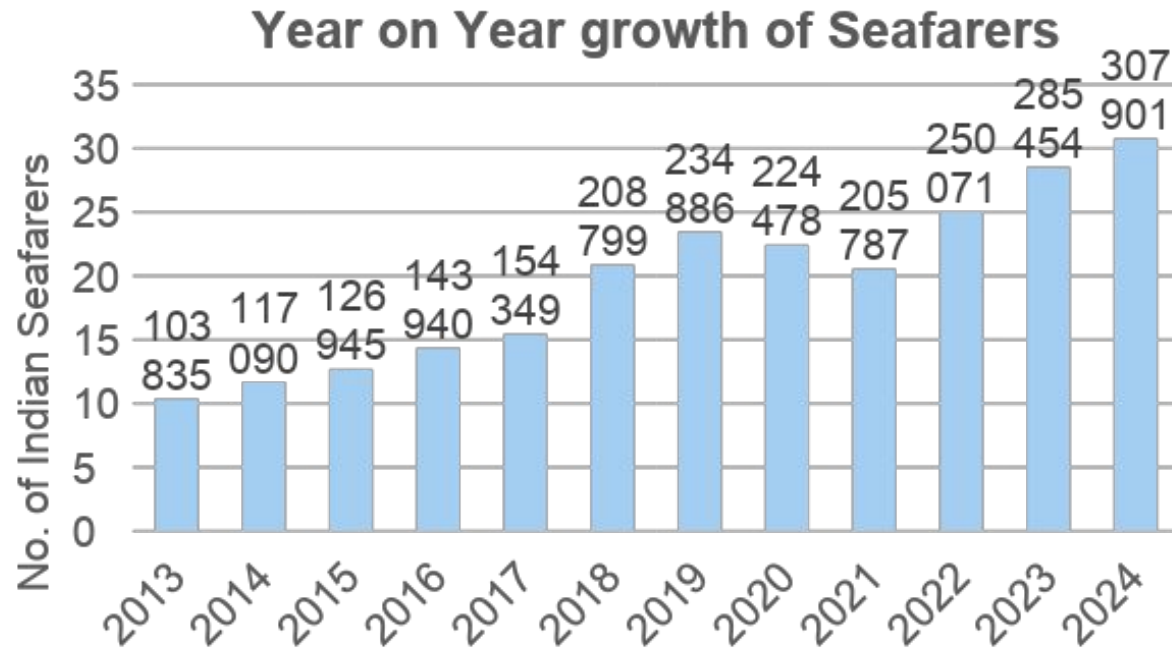
Maritime SheEO Conference

30th October 2025 | India Maritime Week 2025

Directorate General of Shipping | Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

Seafarers and the Seafaring industry are already on the rise, however, with limited representation of women

The number of Indian seafarers have consistently been on the rise in the last decade. With nearly 3.08 lakh seafarers, India provides approximately 12% of the global seafaring pool.



- Of the total pool of Indian seafarers, women seafarers represent less than 2%.
- Statistics clearly indicate that seafaring is not a gender-equitable workspace currently.

Overcoming these issues is key to creating an inclusive and supportive seafaring environment for women

The SMS Task Force (R&D Sub-Committee) surveyed five key stakeholder groups - women cadets, women seafarers, management personnel, and MTI heads. Key findings are as follows-

Systemic & Cultural Barriers

- <2% women in global workforce
- Deep-rooted **gender bias**, stereotypes & limited institutional support
- High **societal resistance** while choosing career at sea
- **Bias, exclusion** & lack of respect during training

Safety, Harassment & Trust Gap

- High incidence of Gender-Based Challenges
- Verbal harassment & discrimination remain prevalent
- **Low Psychological Safety**: Only few feel completely safe at sea
- Low **trust in reporting systems**; fear of retaliation

Infrastructure & Facility Gaps

- **Insufficient women-specific spaces** and provisions
- Gaps in menstrual hygiene, fitness and healthcare support
- Limited or inadequate **onboard facilities**
- Need for gender-responsive **wellness and privacy measures**

Career & Work-Life Challenges

- **Restricted** access to roles & **slower progression**
- Limited mentorship & placement bias
- Reconsider training due to **family responsibilities** conflict
- Stress, isolation & inadequate **mental health support**

MIV 10.15 stresses on the inclusion on women in the seafaring sector

The Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 stresses on the need to have women in the seafaring sector and build a dignified and respectable workspace with ample opportunities for growth.

Awareness and Marketing

- Increasing awareness regarding women seafarer roles through career counselling / marketing campaigns
- Publicize women seafarer success stories to improve sentiment

Incentivization

- Supply: Leverage scholarships and promote participation through waving tuition fees
- Demand: Evaluate mandating domestic shipping companies to hire women seafarers

Promoting gender sensitization

- Promoting gender sensitization and zero tolerance gender discrimination
- Include gender sensitivity and workplace ethics modules in maritime education and officer training programs.

Buddy programs and counselling

- Buddy Programs pairing new women recruits or cadets with experienced officers to ease their transition into maritime work environment
- Confidential counselling services—both online and in-person

Sagar Mein Samman as a flagship initiative to enhance women in seafaring

The Sagar Mein Samman has been launched with the aim to realise the MIV's vision of enhancing the participation of women in the seafaring industry.

Four Pillars of SMS

Empowerment:

- Equip women with skills and confidence to take up leadership roles
- To instill confidence, creating role models, and opening leadership pathways that women have traditionally been excluded from

Inclusivity:

- Promote unbiased recruitment and representation at all levels
- Remaking the seafaring space, rethinking systems, and addressing biases that exist in training, hiring, promotion, and everyday work culture

Safety

- Ensure a harassment-free, supportive work environment
- building a culture of mutual respect and awareness where safety is not a formality but a lived, everyday reality. Only in such an environment can women truly grow and contribute to their full potential.

Skill Development

- Provide tailored training, certifications, and industry exposure.
- Scholarships, mentorships, and continuous learning pathways tailored to the demands of the industry. to prepare them to lead, innovate, and bring fresh perspectives to a sector that needs them

SMS is emerging as a mission to ensure that progress does not bypass half the population.

Strategies for enhancing the participation of women

- Formulation and Enforcement of an Anti-Harassment Policy

Develop & implement a robust anti-harassment framework applicable across maritime institutions, vessels, MTIs and allied bodies, with clear reporting mechanisms and accountability protocols

- Gender-Neutral Advocacy in Maritime Conventions

Proactively engage with international bodies to promote the use of gender-neutral language and inclusive provisions within key conventions such as SOLAS, STCW, MLC etc.

- Official Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Mandates for Maritime Institutions

Enforce CSR obligations for Maritime Training Institutes (MTIs), legal institutions, shipping companies, and associated entities to support gender equity programs, infrastructure, and awareness campaigns

- Benchmarking Global Best Practices

Conduct a comparative policy review and adopt proven practices from gender-progressive maritime nations, including Norway, Sweden, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, and Denmark.

- Institutional Resource Commitment

Secure long-term commitments for scholarships targeted at women & underrepresented groups, Inclusion mandates for MTIs e.g., gender-equal intake policies, gender-sensitive infrastructure Identification & removal of systemic barriers obstructing women's entry & retention in maritime careers

More activities are being planned to strengthen the Sagar Mein Samman initiative

Training Modules

- SMS related training modules to be developed
- These modules to be launched on LMS

Outreach Activities

- Outreach activities for the sensitization of women inclusion in the seafaring industry

Workshops/ Seminars

- Workshops/ seminars to be conducted to demonstrate life in seafaring

R & D

- Research and Development targeted at surveying the job market for women

Women Seafarers Group

- Constitution of a women's seafaring group for regular interactions

Visit to Countries

- Visit to countries to understand their strategies to include women in seafaring

Institutional Mechanism

- Robust institutional mechanism to carry out tasks pertaining to SMS

IMO Assembly

- Present India's ideas in 2026 and explore avenues of collaboration

Goals to be achieved in Sagar Mein Samman

Year 1 – 2025 – 2026

- To set the vision and identity for gender inclusion in maritime.
- Launch outreach, awareness, and e-learning modules.
- Releases India's first Gender Inclusion Policy and Coffee Table Book.
- Empower women through training, visibility, and sector-wide engagement

Year 2 – 2026 – 2027

- Shift to integration and system-level change.
- Gender Framework and audits to be rolled out; outreach expands to colleges, ports, and companies.
- Mentorship program, scorecard, and documentary to be increased

Year 3 – 2027 – 2028

- Focus on expansion and deeper engagement.
- Gender metrics become part of inspection protocols and performance.
- Academic and global partnerships expand gender-forward practices.
- Real workplace changes and policy influence opportunities.

Year 4 – 2028 – 2029

- Consolidation and institutionalization of leadership programs.
- National Conclave and cross-sector dialogues drive broader inclusion.
- Women achievers' stories gain national visibility.
- Women to gain senior roles, diverse career options, and lasting policy influence.

Year 5 – 2029 – 2030

- Focus on legacy and mainstreaming gender inclusion.
- Impact to be reviewed, framework to be updated, and replicable toolkit to be launched.
- Permanent SMS Cell at DGS
- Global showcase highlights India's maritime gender inclusion achievements



Thank You